

ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to proteins belonging to a novel class of proteins designated as β -expansins, a composition comprising such proteins, isolated polynucleotides encoding β -expansins, methods for using the polynucleotides and proteins of the invention and methods for identifying, isolating and purifying expansins, including α and β -expansins. Beta-expansins of the invention have the property of altering physical properties of a plant cell wall, such as for example by loosening or expanding plant cell walls.